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ABSTRACT

In a discussion of the organizational and presidential functions of the community college, four major influences forcing administrative changes are indicated: (1) the usurpation by governing boards of administrative functions; (2) increasing state and federal control with consequent movement toward centralized authority; (3) collective bargaining, which forces centralized administration; and (4) diminishing enrollments and dollars combined with rising costs. To cope with these influences it is proposed that new instructional approaches be encouraged, that organizational structures be examined and redesigned, and that management systems be employed. The latter could include program budgeting, modeling for budget projections, and management by objectives. In addition, the factors of greater faculty productivity, interinstitutional cooperation, and the restoration of the authority and responsibility of the president are seen as necessary to the survival of the community college as a viable part of higher educatior. (RT)

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NEW CONSTRAINTS AND

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPTS

LEAGUE FOR INNOVATION CONFERENCE —

FOR

COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

JULY 20, 1977

JOHN H. ANTHONY

PRESIDENT CAYUGA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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A few months ago one of my Deans brought me an article appearing in Association Management. The title was "Organizational Survival: Will Your Organization Go the Way Of the Dinosaur?" In the article, author Thomas K. Connellan describes the most pathetic member of the dinosaur family, the brontosaurus, as a "species in a state of decline" - 67 feet long, 35 tons in weight, but with a brain the size of a baseball!

Connellan then states the Brontosaurus Principle: "Organizations can grow faster than their brains can manage them in relation to their environment and their own physiology. When this occurs, they become an endangered species."

To carry this Darwinian principle one step further - those species most capable of adapting to dynamically changing conditions are the ones with the best chance for survival. Evidence increasingly links the potential for survival to the ability to change. It also follows that the more demanding the change, the more structured and streamlined the systems for dealing with it must be.

Most of today's organizations have a structure that was designed to solve problems that no longer exist. In fact, community colleges never had an organizational model of their own, they borrowed it from the four year colleges, the universities and the high schools - knowing full well that great differences of purpose, need, content, make-up, philosophy and politic would eventually call for future changes in structure. However, these changes have not occurred, and we in the Community Colleges are for the most part still operating with a borrowed organizational system.

The problems we face in Higher Education are more complex than they have ever been; and the solutions we develop will need to be much more

precise. We are caught with many organizational rigidities when we need organizational flexibilities. We are faced with intensified pressures in finance, governance, public confidence and governmental control. We find disjunctions between faculty and administration, substantative planning and budgetary decision-making, departmental structure and functional areas of concern, central and shared authority, stability and change, autonomy and accountability. No institution in the United States has more constraints placed on it than education, and all these constraints are leading toward one end, the homogeneous and standardization of our colleges and universities. Our central theme is becoming survival, when it should be constructive change: Francis Bacon said it almost four hundred years ago -- "He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils".

What are some of these new evils and what effects are they having on our institutions: Our greatest single concern at the present time must be that in more and more states super boards and legislators and governors are now exercising detailed policy and administrative control over institutions of higher education and unduly infringing upon their essential independence. They are neglecting higher education too much financially, and controlling it too much administratively.

Campuses are becoming less part of free enterprise and more part of the controlled public domain. The Carnege Commission has suggested that increasing state and federal control has turned higher education into a quasi-public utility.

The movement toward even greater centralized authority, however, seems inexorable. It is clear that the public and its elected representatives are no longer willing to let the colleges and universities alone, decide what is educationally best for the society. "Education is too important, and too expensive to be left entirely to the educators".

It is unreasonable to suppose that any government, be it state or federal, is going to appropriate very large sums of money for higher education without attempting to impose conditions as to the use of such funds.

At the State level the executive office or the legislature, or both, indulge in the imposition of cost and workload formulas, line-item budgeting student-staff ratios, go or no-go decisions on certain curricula, control over capital expenditures whether publicly or privately funded, and a whole host of other things. The federal government makes receipt of its funds contingent on compliance with such controls as apply to research on human or animal subjects, safety requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, ethnic origin, or handicapped status of the individual, etc.

(There are currently 13 compliance agencies that rule on affirmative action programs and they cannot agree on the conflicting regulations that determine compliance).

A major feature of the regulating process is that regulations are cast in such a way as to place the burden of proof of good behavior on the defendent institution reversing the ordinary requirements of legal procedure. This means every claim is investigated seriously and a great deal of time is devoted by both parties to the handling of frivolous and trivial complaints. (I am sure all of us can relate our own horror stories).

Passage of laws effecting Higher Education is one thing. To have these laws interpreted in regulations and policies is an entirely different matter. In our dealing with the Federal and State regulatory establishment -- we find ourselves not struggling with political zealots but with bureaucrats -- ordinary government employees carrying out what they perceive to be the requirements of public policy. These "staff members" posess the special skills absolutely essential to bureaucratic success, the talent for confusion, for making simplicity-complex, for expanding two page forms into twelve page forms, for making sociology text books out of common sense.

On the bureaucratic bottom line, stock of higher education is rising, at least as it pertains to staff. There are bureaucratic staffs on state legislative committees, state executive office budgets, state departments of education, state budget offices, and state legislative audit offices; in an impressive variety of federal offices, legislative and executive; in state higher education systems, on coordinating boards, governing boards, and planning agencies. In 1973 the Federal register required 35,591 pages in order to publish all of that year's new decisions. Last year the number of pages had risen to 74,812 -- over 100 percent in three years.

We are literally being legislated to death -- even after death. For after we die, our funeral directors must be certain to follow the regulations set down by the consumer protection agency and the Federal Trade Commission and it only gets worse.

The new section of the Educational Amendments of 1976, effective July 1, 1977 require accurate institutional disclosure of more than a dozen items of student census information including data regarding student retention at the institution, sources of financial assistance, to which

they are entitled and a pleortha of other data that most students won't even bother to read.

It has been estimated that it costs most of us between 3 and 5 per cent of our annual budgets to comply with all of today's State and Federal Regulations. The issue is no longer whether higher education needs to be made accountable, but whether the accountability movement itself can be made accountable.

Another precursor of outside impingement upon the community college can be observed in the active participation of state and federal courts in areas which formerly had been perceived as the private domain of institutions of higher education.

For years college administrators have enjoyed the privilege of not being defendants in litigation arising from the performance of their duties. Today we are being sued in our individual capacities as well as our official capacities. We are defendants not only in litigation arising out of our exercise of judgment, but are subjects of litigation for the action of those under our direction as well.

A recent publication noted the broad range of litigated issues related to students which probably would not have been considered by the courts ten or fifteen years ago:

Legality of dormitory room searches; confidentiality of student files and records of student organizations; recognition and status of student political groups; administrative control over campus newspapers and other publications; access of insiders and outsiders to campus facilities for meetings and rallies; denial of enrollment in or credit for particular courses as well as degree programs; withdrawal of student government positions or offices from alleged campus wrongdoers; and other comparable issues.

Comparable lists could be developed related to personnel, programs, and other areas of college operations. Precedent of court decisions now often becomes the basis for a new procedure or monitoring activity for all institut ons.

A third constraint faced by higher education is the concept of C.B. Today the essential concern of faculty C.B. is not the adversary relationship between faculty and administration, but the induced centralization of authority created in the context of confrontation. In C.B. there is a growing tendency for both sides to have authority highly centralized, with major decision for the Union being moved to the state or national level. Thus flexibility is limited, and the autonomy and individuality of campuses is seriously eroded. The problem is further compounded when one considers that the legislature is the principal architect of the state laws that provide the legal framework for collective bargaining in the public sector. Their interest in economy and in equity among public employees appears to have generated a desire to produce a framework for standardizing personnel policies and procedures across the public sector.

Legislatures are seldom involved in direct across-the-table negotiations with faculty. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that legislative influence over the collective bargaining process ends with the enactment of enabling laws. Legislative influence is manifested in at least four additional ways: the force of legislative expectations that faculty will unionize once enabling legislation is passed; legislative involvement in the contract ratification process; legislative control over the funds needed to finance collective bargaining agreements; and legislative pressures for the standardization of public employee personnel policies and procedures.

The executive branch of government has also played an important role in contract negotiations in some states. Section 89-2 of the Hawaii Public Employee Relations Act defines the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii as the public employer. It also designates "the Governor or his designated representative as a member of management's bargaining team". Could you imagine what would happen in California or New York with the Governor on the bargaining team?

We face additional constraints brought about by what many educators are calling the "age of limits", "the steady state", "the period of no growth; all of which refer to the problem of diminishing enrollments and diminishing dollars. The era of rapid growth is gone (Experts predict stability in enrollment through the year 2000) and we have not prepared for a period of no growth or little growth. We have not put our houses in order to survive the long drought ahead. Nor have we reduced expenditures sufficiently to maintain a balance of income and expenditure.

Rising costs, inflation rates of 10 to 12 percent annually, coupled with the reluctance of taxpayers to increase local support, the problem of state support with its corresponding increase in control, and the possibility of diminishing enrollments even further with tuition hikes, provides little hope for balanced budgets.

In industry manufacturers rely heavily upon their capacity to increase productivity as an offset to rising costs. Educational institutions are not able to increase productivity significantly because they are labor intensive, a large percentage of their total cost is attributable to salaries. An institution's budget for salaries will run in the neighborhood of 70 to 75 percent of its total budget. Significant changes in this ratio can be effected only if personnel costs can be reduced. Educational technology, about which one hears so much, has so far not

produced important cost savings, and faculty power alone may be a reason why significant savings cannot be made in the instructional program. What then are the alternatives? How can we preserve our diversity and our individuality in the face of mounting constraints? How can we develop the mechanism that will insure our flexibility in the face of increased centralization and control -- These are the major challenges.

Our system will never be completely free of these problems; however, controls will become even more onerous unless the necessary steps are taken to define clearly an institution's role in evaluating its own effectiveness.

We often forget how unbelievably outdated the conventional system of education has actually become. We still operate on the assumption that college education must begin with grade 13 and require 2 to 4 years of enrollment for a period of 9 months each, that programs must start in September and end in June, that the best way for a student to learn is to sit in class, that during all hours students must be taught by someone (meanwhile our beautiful libraries and L.R.C.'s remain for the most part vacant, or are used for glorified study halls), that educational achievement can best be measured in terms of hours or credits.

We must be open to experimentation, for here lies the possibility for improving the quality of instruction and the excitement of learning. We must explore new modes of instruction, new types of curricula, new educational timetables, and a wider diversity of educational opportunities.

We must tailor subject matter presentations to fit the special requirements and capabilities of each learner, and we must integrate our curricula, to be truly comprehensive, eliminating the false dichotomy between academic and occupation or regular and continuing education.

Innovating educational programs offer an opportunity to increase

academic productivity, free teachers from routine tasks to make better use of their time, and hold out the possibility of responding more appropriately to the challenges at hand.

Closely related to new approaches to instruction are new approaches to organization. We constantly tinker, when what is needed is a basic examination and restruction of the organization. Good teacher and good students do not necessarily make for good education. Everything depends on how they are put together.

Like education, organizations should not be narrowly compartmentalized. Traditional functionalization fosters a narrow discipline orientation diverting the institutional commitment away from teaching and students and community.

The pyramid pattern -- faculty reporting to department/division chairmen, who report to deans, who report to the president must be questioned. Various combinations of administrative responsibilities should be tried, partly to achieve better economics of scale but also to realign assignments so that learning and teaching will become of paramount importance in the management model.

The organization should serve as a resource equipped to respond appropriately to the task and problems confronting it. It must not be bound by rituals or taboos and should utilize individual talents and technical abilities as each situation demands.

I have often thought that administrative efficiency, flexibility and improved communication may better be served by fewer individuals at the departmental or divisional level. Departments are not remarkably receptive to activities that overlap departmental boundaries. They become highly provincial, rigid and even chauvinistic when they organize too

closely around academic discipline.

When one considers that the outright election by teachers of these tertiary administrative positions causes political diversion and inhibits independent judgment essential to strong leadership, that rotational and short term appointments cause discontinuity and discourage leadership, and that more and more of these positions are being placed in faculty bargaining units -- it might be well to eliminate such positions from the organization and replace them with full-time administrators with broader, interdisciplinary orientations. The key to any organization is to keep it flexible, simple and geared to situational needs. The trend toward increased administrative complexity must be reversed. Administrative leadership will, of course, need specific managerial and technical competencies to successfully administer their institutions in view of the realities of the present and the complexities and uncertainities of the future. There are some very sophisticated tools of management that have been developed for higher education in recent years. We must be careful, however, not to let these new management concepts represent a triumph of technique over purpose.

No managerial tool or technique will supplant balanced judgment and the ability to work with people as the most important elements in the administration of any enterprise. However, such tools may give the decision-maker better information on which to base his judgment or better skills with which to involve others in the organization's activities.

The top administrator needs a regular review of college operations in a concise format. He needs reports that pinpoint potential trouble spots and give a minimum of detail about programs that are going according to plan.

Some of the kinds of information generated by a management information system might include: A comparative profile of admitted applicants who enroll and "no shows" or the numbers and percentages of enrolled students by various categories, such as program major, grade-point average, income level, ability level, information about faculty such as the faculty productivity rate (the total number of student credit hours "produced" by a faculty member during a year), years to retirement, salary levels by rank, information about courses by size of enrollments, popularity of hours, information about the costs per credit hour by department, per degree recipient by major.

Much of this type of information is already collected on most campuses. However, what characterizes a management information system is the consistency, quality, accessibility, compatibility, and continuity of data.

Such data provide the necessary information for planning and regulating the growth and size of our institutions, and by regulating growth under a plan we may be able to direct some energies toward developing internal flexibility and qualative improvement.

A second administrative technique recently introduced to higher education is program budgeting, which establishes the program, rather than the department, as the important budgetary unit.

Program budgeting focuses on the outcomes or products of higher education and their costs. Budgets built on the basis of intelligent planning will reflect and support institutional objectives and priorities. Budgets designed to accomplish specific objectives as opposed to simple line item budgets provide for a practical method for judging the efficiency of the various cost centers in the institution. Wasteful and non-productive elements in the system can, therefore, be identified and rooted out, while efficient cost savings units can be rewarded with additional financial

incentive (like allowing the utilization of carry-over funds for the next fiscal year). Thus we can prune and plant for dynamic growth.

Although program budgeting leads to many difficult and as yet unanswered questions, it is already a valuable technique for helping administrators make more rational decisions about allocation of resources.

Modeling, cost-stimulation, or gaming is another new administrative technique. It is an attempt to predict and plan for the future by projecting what will happen over time to an institution operating under various assumptions. Once an institution has good program budget information, based on current and historical data that shows the cost of every credit hour by discipline, it is helpful to project these data into the future to determine what would happen to the institution under different conditions. For example, enrollment fluctuations, increased class size, etc.

Whereas the techniques of management information systems, program budgeting, and modeling are all a means for working primarily with quantitative data, the technique of "management by objectives" is primarily a means for working more effectively with <u>people</u>. MBO involves procedures (many of which are already in use at well-managed institutions) that make explicit the goals and objectives of each major component of an institution and a timetable for their realization.

These new techniques appeal seductively to the universal hope for easy solutions to difficult problems. No management information system eliminates the need to exercise judgment. Computers and data do not make decisions or arrive at conclusions; they merely present evidence which must be interpreted and evaluated. The need to weigh alternatives, balance consequences, and reason out conclusions cannot be suspended or abrogated.

Two related problems must be guarded against. One is the tendency to accumulate too much data; the other is the tendency to collect the wrong kinds of data. There is little hard evidence that more data or "better" data have actually enabled administrators to make better decisions than they otherwise would. It is undoubtedly easier to justify to others a decision that is supported by objective rather than intuitive data, but the decision may be the same in either case.

The future economic welfare of higher education depends in large part on production practices in the instructional process. Faculty members want increased remuneration, but they are generally uninterested in increased productivity. It is no longer sufficient for faculty members and others to say that their professional practices are not susceptible to managerial techniques and managerial innovation. The professional practice of instruction has become too expensive for any such claim to be valid, and the costs of this professional technology may become even more expensive in the next few years. The sources of income to meet these rising costs are exhaustible, costs will have to be brought under some kind of effective management control, including improvements in the production process and in productivity.

Greater productivity may mean increased class size, differentiated staffing patterns and a greater reliance on non classroom instructional activities. It might even mean that some expensive senior faculty members (highly skilled in teaching and laden with credibility) will have to handle a significant number of beginning courses with large enrollments.

If we are to survive the present, we must avoid the internecine conflicts that currently exist in postsecondary education growing out of competition for more dollars and more students.

We cannot afford to have individual colleges pursue their own interests while pretending to play the game of collaboration. We cannot afford institutional isolationism, for we cannot afford the luxury of duplication and lack of coordination at today's prices. We must draw our strength from one another, we must work together -- for if one fails we all fail. We must voluntarily strengthen our cooperative relationships and work jointly in the development of accountability measures that are credible -- not self serving. If we don't we will continue to have outside agencies do it for us.

We must establish public credibility, by making ourselves more visible -- emphasizing the community in community college and conveying to our constituents the uniqueness of our institutions.

Of course all of these long range plans and actions call for long range leadership. It will take longer than our average 4.5 year tenure. It will be important for us to develop a political sensitivity in recognition of the political make-up of our college environment. For we have been fully thrust into the political arena and to think otherwise is totally naive.

Any vociferous taxpayer at a board meeting, any lobbyist in the corridors of the State Capital, any cagey parliamentarian in a commission meeting can in effect shout down all the theory, philosphy and ideals we express.

We can't cringe with every threat, get uptight with every demand, worry about every uncomplimentary line in the newspaper, capitulate at the smallest stress. We must have the integrity to stand up and say no when it needs to be said and "hell" no when pushed too far.

Too many administrators, when they can't stand the heat in the

kitchen, are found putting their head in the oven.

A college president must act rather than react, stimulate rather than respond, anticipate rather than be surprised, deal with minor problems before they become major problems.

Unfortunately, what has happened is that the authority of the president has been diluted by the authority of faculty members, boards, legislators and students, so that the decision-making process has become diffused and somewhat indecisive.

Indeed, at a time when vision and versatility are at a premium, many colleges and universities are saddled with a recent overlay of participatory bodies for making decisions, policies, or recommendations that not only delay decision and diffuse focus, but possibly conflict and neutralize one another. Participatory governance is a rich and admirable principle, but its implementation by academic institutions, hastened by the pressures of campus unrest a few years ago, has not only lacked an abundance of creative insight, but has scarcely tried to avoid the pitfalls encountered by other institutions of society with long experience in participatory decision-making.

There must be a restoration of the authority and responsibility of the president. Only when strong authority exists is there any possibility that proposed innovations will be debated, tested and implemented.

I am endorsing the reserved powers principle -- where the president assumes all executive powers except those reserved for the board. All others are accountable to the president. This is done with the clear intention that leadership be exercised in a manner that gives weight to the opinion and value of the entire college community. If the executive function is to be strong, but also accountable, there must be an organizational structure that encourages the flow of communications and provides

opportunities for initiative and review. Let's, however, clearly distinguish between decision making and information sharing. Actions and decisions require the input of many persons and cannot totally flow from the energy or intelligence of one person no matter how competent. The final decision, however, must clearly be an administrative one.

In the exercise of our responsibilities we must develop in such a way that the machinery of management does not interfere with our leadership role. We must reorganize to break down calcified organizational lines, shift personnel and redefine jobs to break them out of rigid categories.

This can be a time of consolidation, adjustment and improvement.

In the final analysis higher education is more a matter of how good decisions can be made than it is of any single clear principle to be followed.

"A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aims fulfilled. They will all say, 'we did this ourselves'".

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